



# Employees' Retirement System Communicator

March 2012

No. 3

## Contact Information Employees' Retirement System

Please contact the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) at **414-278-4207** in Milwaukee or **toll-free at 877-652-6377** outside of Milwaukee for all Pension questions, including Retirement calculations. You can also contact ERS via email at [ers@milwcnty.com](mailto:ers@milwcnty.com).

## Life & Health Benefits

Please contact the Benefit Division with Life and Health Benefits related questions at: **414-278-4198**. You can contact Benefits via email at [benefits@milwcnty.com](mailto:benefits@milwcnty.com)

## Newly Retired Members

Lamonte Allen  
John Ambeau  
Phillip Bangura  
Louise Body  
Lula Borden  
Mary Braasch  
Karen Brooker  
John Brooks  
Karen Burazin  
Gregory Calvin  
Mary Charrey  
Roger Chwala  
Kathie Clasen  
Dennis Cook  
Frank Corona  
Barbara Donahue

## From the Desk of the ERS Manager

Greetings!

I hope the daffodils and other Spring flowers add a brightness to your day as they have mine. Springtime often gives individuals the incentive to start something new (exercising or activities to keep the brain challenged) or to change an old habit (quitting smoking or limiting sweets). This month's Communicator includes money-saving tips and ways to incorporate healthy eating into your lifestyle without spending tons of money

The Annual Meeting of the Milwaukee County Pension Board will be held Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at the Italian Conference Center located at 631 E Chicago Avenue, Milwaukee. Parking is available at the rear of the building. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. with a continental breakfast available. You will have the opportunity to meet your new Board members, hear news from our investment consultants and actuary and chat with ERS staff. We'll plan on wrapping the meeting up at 11 a.m. Please call ERS (414-278-4207) if you are planning to attend the meeting.

If you have any questions at all regarding your pension or healthcare benefits, please call our office at either of the numbers listed in the shaded box to the left. We are here to help!

*Marian Ninneman*  
ERS Manager

## SAVING MONEY – AVOID MISGUIDED STRATEGIES

A *Wall Street Journal* pundit recently wrote that Americans know perfectly well how to save money: spend less. As proof he cites what has happened during the "Great Recession". For years, economists worried about our declining savings rate. But when the U. S. economy tanked, Americans suddenly started saving again (despite declining incomes in many cases). Being frugal has become fashionable.

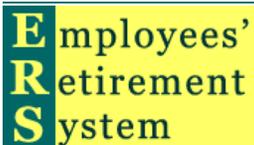
Information on money-saving strategies abound. Websites, publications and even TV programs have sprung up with advice on ways to save. *Consumer Reports* "Money Advisor" points out that sometimes tactics that appear to be thrifty are anything but. Here are some misguided strategies to avoid:

### **DON'T buy an Extended Warranty Plan**

These plans are high-profit items for retailers. They wouldn't push so hard to sell them if they were really good deals for you.

### **DON'T shop for groceries with a handheld basket**

A recent study found that shoppers who carry a basket are more likely to toss in impulse



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*No. 3*

items. If you go into a grocery store to buy one or two items, you don't really need a basket. Avoid it altogether and you'll be less tempted to buy things you don't need.

### **DON'T spend Airline Miles on other stuff**

If you're earning airline miles with a rewards credit card, the issuer will probably try to entice you to spend them on merchandise like jewelry, sports equipment or housewares. These are almost never good deals. You'll get more value for your reward miles if you use them to pay for air travel.

### **DON'T always buy the cheapest choice**

For certain products, you'll pay more in the long run. A better way to decide what brand to buy is to check the product ratings in *Consumer Reports* for their "Best Buys" or reviews found on many websites. Repair frequency and product quality are as important as price on items like big-screen TVs, mattresses and paint.

### **DON'T overbuy on discount-deal sites**

Several websites (like Groupon) promote limited-time deals that can save you 50% or more on dining, travel and other goodies. Resist the impulse to overbuy. If you can't use the discount before the special deal expires, you've wasted your money.

### **DON'T sign up for electronics' buyback programs**

Retailers like Best Buy and Walmart introduced these programs within the last year. For an upfront fee, they promise to let you turn in your old items for credit toward new ones. Sounds good, but the payouts aren't great and you will be out of luck if the store doesn't sell the new gadget you want. And if you get buyback protection on a cell phone, tablet or other device with a wireless contract, you will still be responsible for the early-termination costs for the service plan.

### **DON'T buy only on sale**

You can't assume that a posted sale price is always a bargain. For example, a well-known national retailer recently advertised a Calphalon brand thermal coffee maker at a sale price of \$116.99 marked down from the regular price of \$129.99. But Calphalon lists the regular price as \$99.95! Retailers will frequently mark an item up so they can mark it down and advertise a sale price. Check prices online before you buy to be sure you are getting a good deal.

### **DON'T attempt "Do It Yourself" (DIY) projects if you don't know how**

You can save a lot of money tackling home repairs and improvements yourself. DIY has become so popular that an entire TV network is devoted to it. However, know your limitations. Getting in over your head can turn your project into an expensive nightmare. Objectively assess any DIY project before taking it on.

### **DON'T buy something just because it's on sale**

It's easy to be seduced by a cheap price. Many of us have items in our closet (still with tags on) that we bought because it was too good a deal to pass up. But if you don't have an immediate need for that clothing, you are just spending money unnecessarily.

### **DON'T buy in bulk just to get a cheaper price**

Shopping at Costco, Sam's Club or other warehouse clubs may actually make us spend more in the end. Since these clubs sell everything in enormous quantities, we tend to buy more than we would otherwise. So even if we pay less per item, our total spending is higher. For certain products with expiration dates, we run the risk of waste. Sometimes, however, it does make sense to buy in bulk. The article below on healthy eating gives tips when buying in bulk may provide benefits.

# *Employees' Retirement System*

## *Communicator*

*March 2012*

*No. 3*

### **FROM THE BENEFITS DEPARTMENT**

#### **Healthy Eating on a Budget How to eat healthy without going broke.**

You know you should improve your diet, but fresh foods always seem to cost more. It is possible to have a healthy diet on a reasonable budget, though. If you follow these tips, you'll discover that you don't have to dip into your savings just to eat healthy.

##### **Buy in Bulk**

- Buy large portions, divide into individual servings and freeze. This works well for lean meats and poultry. Many health food stores/co-ops have bulk sections where you can buy rice, beans, oatmeal, nuts and other grains for much less than prepackaged products.
- When available, buy bags of fruit instead of individual pieces by the pound.
- Avoid snack traps like 100-calorie packs. Make your own single-serving portions with mini snack bags.

##### **Cook and Store in Bulk**

- Make dishes on the weekends that you can eat during the week, or freeze and use at a later date. A big bowl of bean soup or chili can be dinner as well as lunch for the next day or two.
- This can save you from more expensive, sometimes less healthy options such as frozen dinners, take-out food, or last-minute detours to the drive-through window.

##### **Manage the Meat**

- Look for lean meat, poultry and fish on sale, and freeze for later use.
- Trade lean meats for other protein sources occasionally. Beans, tofu and eggs are excellent protein choices and good alternatives to pricier animal protein

##### **Be season-savvy**

- Seasonal fruits and vegetables taste best and are often much less pricey than imported out-of-season varieties. Look for reduced produce in the supermarket. It is usually only a day or two old, but much less expensive.
- Visit local farmers and ethnic markets, where produce is often less expensive and fresh

##### **Go generic**

- Generic or store brands offer great savings and typically are just as nutritious as their costlier counterparts.

##### **Convenience counts**

- If you find your produce often goes bad, try frozen options. Look for products packed in their own juice, or made without salt or sugar.
- Stock up on low-cost staples, such as brown rice, barley, dried or canned beans and whole-wheat pasta. These are great for stretching meals at little cost. Add brown rice to a canned vegetable soup, or mix lean ground beef with rinsed canned beans and whole-wheat elbow noodles.

##### **Plan Ahead**

- Menu planning will help you reduce any waste of produce and other fresh foods. Research shows that shoppers without a list tend to buy more food, especially of the snacking variety!

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## Don't go to the store hungry

Being hungry will weaken your resolve. You'll be more tempted to indulge in items that are unhealthy and more costly.

## Limit Junk Food

Ice cream, chips, cookies and prepared frozen foods can add up to be the most expensive things in your cart. Trade the money you spend on junk for fresh avocados, luscious grape tomatoes and crunchy apples. All are delicious and totally natural.

Follow these simple tips and your budget-conscious ways may also lead to fewer medical bills and prescriptions. A healthy body is the best bargain of all.

## Newly Retired Members (con't)

Neil Dretzka	Edward Graham	Linda Kokemueller	Donald Reichartz	Henretta Smith
Gary Dumke	Douglas Haaning	Alice Kowalski	Judy Renner	Katherine Spencer
Kim Dunigan	David Hargreaves	Kathleen Krill	Thomas Riley	Crol Stoecker
David Eisner	Linda Jackson	Sharon Kroening	Timothy Risse	Mark Strothenke
Melissa Elliott	Sandra Jacobs	Kristine Larsen	Janet Robinson	Amy Strzeszewski
Theresa Engl	Thomas Jaeck	James Lowe	Barbara Rose	Kenneth Swan
Loucis Evans	Janise Johnson	Rosemary Maas	Maureen Rowe	Roger Torgerson
Dennis Farina	Dennis Kennedy	Craig McCann	John Schapekahm	Loretta Tuck
Deborah Foti	Annie Kimbrough	Frances Moore	Keith Schmidt	Sylvia Turner
Douglas Funk	Elaine Kinzey	Lanna Nelson	Timothy Schroettner	Sheila Vallier
Cheryl George	Kenneth Kfimeck	Sandra Patti	Nancy Senn	Joan Vitense
	Norman Klobuchar	Maurice Puley	Robert Sladky	Susan Zaffiro

## In Memoriam

*Please keep the families of these recently deceased retirees and spouses in your thoughts:*

James Agen	Frank Frances	Rita Marx	Rose Stachowski
Robert Allen	George Golembrewski	Patrick Mc Elwee	Margaret Steinmetz
Ruth Barrett	Getrude Hackl	Carol Meyer	Nona Truesdell
Gwendola Bramlett	Earl Harr	Barbara Moritz	Delbert Walker
Yvonne Cera (Edward)	Martha Jaeger (John)	Gregory Raab	Adelle West
Vernette Dumke	Violet Johnson	Harold Rock	
Coleman Ellis	Thomas Manteufel	Helen Sapinski (Henry)	
Ruby Ellis	Evelyn Marek	Audrey Schmidt	